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ABSTRACT

This study argues that school-to-work programs should be institutionalized in the schools to provide assistance to students without vocational education, who are not headed for college. Such students, it is asserted, are often disadvantaged, minority, and otherwise underserved youth. The report examines the issue of "school-to-work" historically, beginning with the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917. It then analyzes contemporary school-to-work programs. Common elements and areas of tension are identified and described. It is argued that planning for the institutionalization of the school-to-work transition must center around one chief point: such programs should be an integral part of the education process. The Job Training Partnership Act is explored, as is the relationship between schools and the private sector. The Boston Compact partnership program is reviewed as an example of a quid-pro-quo agreement between a school system and a Private Industry Council, and the du Pont initiative is examined in the light of the findings of this paper. It is asserted that "no other initiative affords so good a mechanism for stemming the flow of new entrants into the pool of structural unemployment." (KH)

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INSTITUTIONALIZING THE SCHOOL-TO-WORK TRANSITION

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INSTITUTIONALIZING THE SCHOOL-TO-WORK TRANSITION

A Report Prepared for

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MDC, Inc.
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Author's Note

Funding for the study reflected in this report was provided by The Ford Foundation under Grant No. 820-0878. This report is Part II of a final report under that grant. Part I, delivered to the Ford Foundation by letter dated August 9, 1983, consisted of recommendations for internal process evaluation for Jobs for America's Graduates; it was communicated jointly to JAG and Ford. Part II consists of an examination of the institutionalization issue in school-to-work programs generally.

In addition to a literature search of school-to-work transition programs dating back to the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917, MDC drew for Part II on research beginning in 1978, when it was called upon to monitor a series of Youth Career Development projects for the Office of Youth Programs of the U.S. Department of Labor. That monitoring experience was extended over to Jobs for America's Graduates programs beginning in 1981, first for OYP, and later for The Ford Foundation. Finally, in 1982-83, under the grant for which this final report was prepared, site visits were carried out to 11 sites and supported by a telephone investigation that reached numerous other sites and individuals knowledgeable in the operation and evaluation of school-to-work transition programs.

The programs discussed in this paper owe a great deal to the support of various private foundations, including The Ford Foundation. Special credit should be given the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation for its support of a variety of "Partnership Projects," including the Richmond and Boston programs discussed in depth herein; and to the Rockefeller Foundation for its support of Jobs for America's Graduates.

R. C. Smith
MDC, Inc.

ABSTRACT

School-to-work transition demonstrations abound nationally. Most are intended to assist high school youth who are neither enrolled in vocational education nor headed for college or post-secondary technical training to finish their education and move on to jobs. While these programs have enjoyed various degrees of success, only a few have confronted the issue of how the process of preparing such students for work can be institutionalized in the schools.

The question is particularly relevant today because Governor Pierre du Pont, chairman of the board of directors of Jobs for America's Graduates, has endorsed a national school-to-work transition initiative to be created through a new title of the Job Training Partnership Act. At the same time a national effort is being mounted, sparked by the report of the National Commission on Excellence in Education, to improve public schooling generally.

The issue raised is whether the disadvantaged, often minority, and otherwise underserved youth who make up the target of school-to-work programs will be assisted at the same time educational sights are raised for more advantaged students. This study proceeds from the position that that should happen, and that it can happen as a result of a national effort to help school-to-work transition programs become institutionalized under JTPA.

The report examines the issue of "school-to-work" historically, beginning with the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917. It then moves on to examine

contemporary school-to-work programs on the cutting edge of the institutionalization process. Drawing on MDC's 16 years of experience in monitoring and analyzing such programs and operating pre-vocational training demonstrations, the report points up best practices, with special reference to various Jobs for America's Graduates programs nationally and to Partnership Project programs offered currently in Richmond, Virginia, and Boston, Massaschusetts.

Common elements of school-to-work programs are examined:

• An intervention agency -- an independent, outside entity that establishes the program and introduces it into the schools;

• A private sector connection -- a private sector-dominated board of directors or advisory committee that brings the world of business into the classroom and translates its commitment into active support for the program;

• A curriculum or training package -- usually in two parts, the first concentrating on teaching job-preparedness and job-retention skills (interviewing for employment, good grooming and work habits, positive interaction with fellow employees); and the second aimed at building self-esteem and self-confidence; and

• A job placement function -- some means of inducing private sector employers to hire specific young people, in some cases for part-time employment while they are in school, and in most cases for full-time employment once they have graduated.

Areas of tension found in many school-to-work transition programs are also examined; e.g., the debate over whether to give academic credit

for school-to-work participation; whether to provide students with part-time jobs or enroll them in career clubs; whether to enroll only economically disadvantaged students or a mix; and the issue of who should be responsible for the job placement function -- the in-school instructor or someone else.

The argument for the necessity of planning for the institutionalization of these programs is developed around a number of points, chief being that school-to-work transition should be an integral part of the process of education, rather than an add-on for students who have not been prepared for their futures until they become seniors in high school.

An important missing element in most of these programs -- remedial academic instruction -- is examined and its place in the process fixed.

The connection with the new Job Training Partnership Act is explored, as is the crucial "outside" connection between the schools and the private sector. Means by which the private sector can maintain that contact during the course of a school-to-work transition program are cited:

* Frequent visits to the classroom to observe participants, first as they come into the program with problems of self-image and assertiveness, and later as they "come out of their shells" and begin to present themselves as motivated young adults.

* Inviting participants to offices and plants to help them gain a better feeling for their capabilities and to acquaint them firsthand with particular work environments.

• Appearing with participants on civic club programs and talking with peers about school-to-work matters.

• Committing to hire as many participants as possible, based always on satisfactory progress toward high school completion.

The partnership known as the Boston Compact is reviewed as an example of a quid-pro-quo agreement between a school system and a Private Industry Council setting the bounds of the institutionalization process.

That process, itself, is broken down into its four basic components, which represent successive steps in program institutionalization:

• Establishment of a partnership agreement involving the intervention agency, the private sector, and the schools; and including goals and objectives and a plan for institutionalization.

• Acceptance by the schools of responsibility for teaching the curriculum and preparing students for employment according to the partnership agreement.

• Acceptance by the schools -- or in some manner by the local community or the state -- of the burden of financing the processes stimulated by school-to-work transition according to the plan for institutionalization.

• Absorption of the school-to-work materials into the schools and integration with academic and vocational offerings.

That last step -- the "fourth generation" of development -- completes the institutionalization process by treating the elements of school-to-work as integral parts of a curriculum which can be viewed as a seamless whole -- a curriculum that can be extended to students who may not

be bound for college at an early point in their education, and one that fuses academic, vocational, and work-preparation elements.

The dangers of rigid bureaucratization of these elements within the schools are discussed, and the necessity of continuing an outside-inside partnership between the communities and their schools is emphasized.

Finally, the du Pont initiative is examined in the light of the findings of the paper. Setting aside issues of the funding level and the speed with which the program would build enrollment, the author argues that the time has come for a national effort to support school-to-work programs. At the same time, however, qualifying points are raised:

- Any national initiative should be based first on local (or state) initiatives, including an agreement between the schools and the private sector and definitely including a plan for institutionalization.
- The process of proliferation nationally should profit from the wealth of knowledge already available on how to do successful school-to-work transition programs.
- A national initiative should also provide some means of capturing that body of experience and making it available to other sites that are contemplating or already investing in school-to-work programs.
- All this suggests that the funding level for a national effort in this direction is not so important as a congressional decision to invest in school-to-work transition and a solid plan for that investment, making localities and states equal partners with the federal government.

The report concludes:

An incentive-based, partnership-based, locally operated, and federally funded effort to stimulate the school-to-work process wherever the ground can be prepared for it makes sense. Few other initiatives in the employment and training field over the past 25 years have offered so great an opportunity for changing the way educational and training institutions respond to the problems young people face in preparing for the world of work. No other initiative affords so good a mechanism for stemming the flow of new entrants into the pool of structural unemployment.

At the same time, we do well to remember that the process will inevitably be a slow one, and one that cannot be speeded up artificially by an influx of federal dollars without threatening the quality of the programs. It will be far better to nurture the process carefully where it has been implemented, and then to send out missionaries with examples of successful operation and institutionalization to other states and localities.

It would be hard to imagine a better time for such a national initiative. If the nation is indeed embarking on a broad-based drive for excellence in public education, if we are setting out on a crusade for educational reform, then that crusade's goal should be to improve opportunities for all, including those young people, both in high school and out, who have no plans for post-secondary education or training.

INSTITUTIONALIZING THE SCHOOL-TO-WORK TRANSITION

School-to-work transition programs designed to ease the passage of youth from the classroom to the work place have, in recent years, been much in vogue around the country. One might get the impression that they are something new, but the truth is that the concept underpinning them has been around a long time. Present attention attests more than anything else to the deepening national concern over persistently grim youth unemployment figures. The present-day generation of school-to-work programs, it is hoped, may provide an answer to that problem.

Typically, these programs are intended to help young people -- especially economically disadvantaged and minority youth, whose employment rates are highest -- across the threshold of work to a point at which regular employment is a given of life. The programs operate in the classroom, in industrial or business settings, or in some combination of both. They treat high-school-age students who are still (at least physically) present in school as well as those who have dropped out. They typically involve some kind of intervention agency, and they interact with the private sector. A recent manual cited 55 such efforts around the country, involving a total of 7,146 private companies; it could have added many others.[1]

"Do They Work?"

The question that is almost inevitably asked first of such programs is: Do they work? Do they provide valuable services to their youthful

participants? Most school-to-work programs can produce, along with their program descriptions, some form of self-evaluation or outside evaluation that answers the question affirmatively. By their own standards, that is, the programs are succeeding. The observer can document various degrees of success narratively, anecdotally, and statistically. Insofar as the programs are measured only by their impact on participants, they constitute an important step forward in the evolution of the school-to-work concept. But when we look inside the schools themselves, another kind of question arises, one not so easily answered: Are these programs having a positive impact on the schools, the nation's primary education and training ground for youth? Put another way: Are we permanently changing the institution responsible for education, or are we merely adding duplicative and expensive alternative approaches -- approaches that can only endure as long as their particular leadership survives?

This paper will proceed from the assumption that school-to-work programs must have change in the schools as their primary, overriding goal. If they are to be an effective response to youth unemployment, they have to move in the direction of that goal.

Every year, more than 3 million young Americans graduate from high school. Of that number probably 500,000, or 16 percent, have no plans to attend college or enter a vocational institution.* In many cases,

* These figures are based on the post-secondary plans of high school seniors as stated by a sample of those seniors. Our field work, however, has convinced us that the sixteen percent figure is a considerable understatement. In fact, at every high school we have visited, teachers and administrators have estimated that between 27 and 34 percent of all their seniors have no genuine plans for continuing their education.

it is fair to say that they have no plans, period. They have been eased through a school system geared to produce college-bound youth, vocationally trained youth, or youth on their way to vocational training; they did not fit well in that system, and they are good bets not to fit well in the working world outside. If we add to their number the approximately 5.2 million young people who drop out of high school each year, we are looking at the hard, central core of the youth unemployment problem. In that pool of jobless, directionless young people, a minority -- those from more advantaged backgrounds -- will, in the long run, still make out all right. But the great majority have neither the frame of reference that orients them to employment nor the coping skills necessary for handling that employment. They do not have the information, the personal and family contacts, the orientation, or even the system of values that would allow them to succeed in the primary labor market.

Must Affect Schools

If current school-to-work transition programs are to represent more than a glancing blow at a problem that deserves far more, they will have to affect materially the way the schools behave toward the population of students just described. And they will have to achieve that change at a time when conflicting currents are affecting the schools. The new wave of activity spurred by the report of the National Commission on Excellence in Education and other similarly fashioned efforts goes to the issue of improved academic education for all. Whether it results

in that end, or only in improved education for the academically gifted -- as, for instance, was the case with the National Defense Education Act, the nation's answer to the Soviet Sputnik -- remains to be seen. The question, as put by one veteran observer recently, is: "What's going to happen to poor kids in the midst of a middle-class crusade for educational reform?"

To poor kids, and, we should add, to a lot of others who are not, for whatever reasons, suited to the pace or content of the system we call public education.

Since we are convinced that school-to-work programs should have, and -- as we shall see -- can have an impact on the schools, this paper will concentrate on a number of examples based in the schools. It will not treat the dozens of programs that use industrial settings as magnets for student vocational training, nor those that place teachers in industrial settings, although both are valuable, and the latter can be said to have some effect on schools as teacher-training mechanisms. This paper will not attempt to evaluate the programs discussed here except against the yardstick of permanent institutional change. Is the program effecting, or could it effect, changes in the schools that allow the schools to prepare young people better for life? That will be the question.

And it is within that framework that this paper will also attempt to deal with issues inherent in the national school-to-work transition program suggested by Governor Pierre du Pont of Delaware, who is proposing a new title to the Job Training Partnership Act to be funded in the

first year at $300 million. Is such an initiative, or could it be, a good idea?

* * *

It is fashionable to scold the public schools these days for what they do not do, as well as for what they may not do particularly well. The schools, some say, do not produce sufficient graduates prepared to pursue further academic training in the sciences or humanities, though the nation's functional literacy level has never been so high. Others criticize the schools for not producing, in every graduate who is not going on to further academic education, a motivated and job-ready potential member of the work force.

But we forget that, not so long ago, the American public school system was being asked to do quite a different thing: to keep students in school against any inclination they might have for a plunge into the world of work. Commenting on the rise in the legal school-leaving age to sixteen years at the turn of the century, Joseph F. Dineen, in his biography of perennial Boston mayor Michael Curley, notes:

> The age limit children must reach . . . was not raised because ward or city bosses thought education was good for them. It was raised to solve a different problem. As the population increased, a labor shortage disappeared and a labor surplus was created. A time came when the ward bosses found it difficult to keep heads of families employed, let alone their children. . . . Keeping children in school until they reached the age of 16 would defer the problem of finding work for them until the bosses found a way to cope with the problem; and they hoped education might solve it by giving children enough training to find jobs for themselves.[21]

Keeping Children In School

Thus, when the demand for younger workers decreased, education was assigned the task of keeping children out of the labor market, as well as that of preparing them for entry into it. Two decades later, the passage of the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 reflected another change in priorities. Then, against the need for increased national production occasioned by the growing likelihood of American involvement in the European war, the society saw the value of helping the schools to prepare its young males for work on the farms and in the factories, and its young females as homemakers. The U. S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers were among the champions of that drive toward federal aid to vocational education, and their support was echoed by local boards of education, many of which were dominated by leaders of business and industry. (Relatedly, many liberal educational thinkers of that era worked to keep industry's influence over education to a minimum. To the extent they succeeded, they contributed to the "isolation" of schools from the world of work — a situation often considered a major problem of education today.)

The proponents of vocational education did not, however, espouse vocational education as a substitute for academic education; rather, vocational education was seen as a supplement to academic training. The basic purpose of vocational education was to make the educational process more meaningful to those students who had no post-secondary educational aspirations by integrating academic training with vocational preparation.

Viewed in that light, the goals of the Vocational Education Act of 1917 were strikingly similar to the goals of modern school-to-work transition programs. Although students are remaining in school today longer than they did in 1917 and the vocational education system has been with us now for 66 years, dramatic demographic and technological changes, coupled with bureaucratization of the American educational system, have resulted in problems similar to those which existed in 1917.

Enter The Private Sector

One of the more exciting aspects of the Smith-Hughes Act was that it called for private sector participation in education. The Act required private sector representation on vocational education advisory councils at the national and state levels. In addition, the Act called for the recruitment of a new type of teacher and for counseling of students, each of which caused problems in early implementation of the program.

It seemed clear that vocational education of the sort established under Smith-Hughes required a new type of teacher -- one who was skilled, first, in the occupational area in which he would teach. The Federal Board for Vocational Education -- the body established by the Smith-Hughes Act to administer the new program -- made that point unequivocally: "It is, of course, essential always that the teacher shall be able to teach, but it does not follow that he shall always qualify as a professional teacher (emphasis added). It is much more important that the instructor in carpentering, for example, at least as regards shopwork

instruction, shall be a competent carpenter than that he shall have attended a normal school."[3]

Nine years later, when it seemed that the Board's advice was being ignored, it issued a stronger statement: "The Board believes that should the time ever come when vocational programs will be conducted by individuals who have been selected on the basis of their academic degrees rather than on the basis of mastery of their occupations, vocational education of the type contemplated under the national vocational education act will become inefficient and will fail to render the social service which Congress and the framers of the act intended should be rendered."[4]

The Smith-Hughes Act authorized the appropriation of $1 million per year (a considerable amount of money at the time) for the training of vocational education teachers, but its framers always maintained that skills and experience were the primary qualifications for vocational education instructors. That meant, of course, that teachers had to be recruited from the private sector and that, in many instances, vocational education instructors had no more formal education than the students they were instructing. The traditional educational establishment objected to the certification of teachers who, in its opinion, lacked the necessary academic preparation.

Enter The Counselors

The Smith-Hughes Act also called for the provision of "vocational counseling and guidance" to students 14 years of age and older. Before the passage of Smith-Hughes, very few counselors were employed in public schools. At first, the Act tapped the same source for counselors as

for the new vocational education teachers -- private industry. Between 1917 and 1938, the majority of vocational counselors hired by the public schools were recruited from private industry. In 1938, however, a unit of occupational guidance and counseling was established in the Office of Education, training manuals were developed, and colleges and universities were offered reimbursement for institution of vocational gudiance and counseling courses. It was also decided that all counselors must first be certified teachers. The recruitment pool for counselors subsequently moved from private industry to the colleges and universities. "Amateurs" had been replaced by "professionals."

At about the same time, vocational education teaching was being absorbed into the overall educational system. When responsibilities of the Federal Board for Vocational Education were reassigned to the Office of Education in 1933, the system entered a new phase. Rigid academic, craft-competency, and experience qualifications were promulgated, and courses in vocational education pedagogy proliferated in colleges and universities. Fewer instructors were recruited from the private sector, and a large bureacracy was established at the federal level. By the 1960s, vocational education was being accused of providing instruction in obsolete occupations, often taught by instructors with very little experience in the "real world," that is, in the "world of work." At the same time, the problem of entrenched structural unemployment was being recognized. Many young people leaving school were not ready to enter jobs as productive workers, so they, of course, fared poorly in an economy that, by then, was constantly discarding even

experienced workers. The poor and the poorly trained were increasingly unable to compete in a capital-intensive economy.

MDTA and Beyond

This conjunction of circumstances led to passage of the Manpower Development and Training Act of 1962, the Vocational Education Act of 1963, and the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 -- all directed, at least in part, at reinvigorating what were considered moribund parts of the training-for-work system, including vocational education. That effort continued under CETA and, from the viewpoint of this study, reached its peak with the 1977 amendment to CETA known as the Youth Employment and Demonstration Projects Act of 1977, which came at a time when youth unemployment statistics were rising at a frightening rate.

One of the YEDPA initiatives was the Youth Incentive Entitlement Pilot Projects, a guaranteed-jobs program for disadvantaged youth from specified areas who agreed to continue their high school education. "Entitlement," as the program came to be known, did not include a separate curriculum for its participants, and it involved the private sector only by subsidizing participants' salaries with private employers. The program's $1.5 billion funding did, however, help it attract national attention to the issues of school-to-work, and it undoubtedly opened the door for later efforts at closer collaboration with the private sector.

At the same time and also under YEDPA, individual demonstration projects involving employment training for young people proliferated.

In the winter of 1979, the Office of Youth Programs of the U. S. Department of Labor asked my organization, MDC, to monitor 56 of the new demonstration projects. Thirty of those were Youth Career Development (YCD) projects, which were essentially school-to-work demonstrations. Over a period of 15 months, MDC staff visited those projects and developed reports on them for OYP.

Missing Linkages

Those reports make fascinating reading four years later. Generally, the demonstrations were mounted by community-based organizations which, while in touch with the target population, had no linkages -- and developed no linkages -- with either the educational community or the private sector. Most of the projects had no job development component. Many had only the most tenuous connections with the schools; some had none. The writer recalls visiting one such project whose staff members had specifically been barred from entering the school grounds to talk with students.

What the early YEDPA projects did, for the first time, was to concentrate attention on teaching disadvantaged youth what they needed to know about getting and holding jobs. Where Entitlement had focused on keeping students in school and part-time jobs, the YCD demonstrations developed curricula for the teaching of life-coping, job-finding, and job-holding skills. Here and there, as we shall see, they produced programs worth bragging about. Even when they did not, they helped draw national attention to the worsening problem of youth unemployment.

Jobs For America's Graduates: The Second Generation

The YEDPA demonstrations of 1978-80, then, may be viewed as "first-generation" demonstrations of school-to-work programming, directed mainly from outside the schools. While those projects were working their way to extinction, for the most part, an effort destined to receive much more notice was getting under way in Delaware. Under the sponsorship of Governor Pierre S. du Pont, the Jobs for Delaware Graduates program began in the 1979-80 school year. That prototype of the "Jobs for America's Graduates" program was, as former OYP head Robert Taggart has observed, a "variant" of the YCD demonstrations,[5] but it was also significantly different from the earlier efforts. It was, first and foremost, a demonstration in the schools -- a "second-generation" school-to-work program.

Over the past five years, the Jobs for America's Graduates program has spread to eight states. A recent evaluation of the first year of operation (1981-82) of the first five sites produced impressive statistical results. Against a comparison group, the JAG graduates were 54 percent more likely to be employed in the fall after the program, and they earned on the average $750 more per person during the first six months after graduation.[6]

What is called the JAG "model" generally consists of a powerful political presence (typically a Governor or a leading educational official); a strong board of directors drawn largely from business and industry; and a local staff of administrators and "job specialists." The job specialists are paid by JAG, but they work in the high schools, alongside regular teachers, with young people (generally seniors) who

are neither enrolled in vocational education tracks nor headed for college. Depending on the local project's particular funding pattern (the program has Department of Labor funding, foundation support, and, in some cases, state and private sector funding), enrollment in a JAG class may be entirely, or only partly, made up of economically disadvantaged youth. The program is designed to hold those young people in school long enough to receive diplomas, and then to place them directly in jobs. Program success is typically recited in terms of initial placement rates.

But despite direction from a national office in Washington, the JAG programs are not so much a single, replicated model as a loose confederation of similarly intentioned efforts. Jobs for Cincinnati Graduates, for instance, proves a notable exception to the rule of a strong political presence at the top -- the power there comes from the city's private sector, which provides 70 percent of the funding. Cincinnati also goes against the general tilt away from vocational education students -- 54 percent of present enrollees are on vocational education tracks. Our visits to other JAG sites disclosed individualistic approaches to program management, to counseling, and to the provision of specific skills training.

A School-To-Work Model

Such diversity is welcome and adds to the high level of experimentation going on both in JAG and in less-publicized but equally ambitious programs around the country. Yet for all the diversity, there are

common elements that successful school-to-work programs share to one degree or another. They include:

- An intervention agency -- an independent, outside entity that establishes the program and introduces it into the schools.
- A private sector connection -- a private sector-dominated board of directors or advisory committee that brings the world of business into the classroom and translates its commitment into active support for the program.
- A curriculum or training package -- usually in two parts, the first concentrating on teaching job-preparedness and job-retention skills (interviewing for employment, good grooming and work habits, positive interaction with fellow employees); and the second aimed at building self-esteem and self-confidence.
- A job placement function -- some means of inducing private sector employers to hire specific young people, in some cases for part-time employment while they are in school, and in most cases for full-time employment once they have graduated.

There are dozens of training packages to choose from despite the relatively narrow range of content. When MDC decided to do a school-to-work demonstration in North Carolina in 1980, we pulled elements from 15 different curricula in use around the country, some of them adaptations for high school youth of materials developed to motivate and prepare chronically unemployed adults for jobs back in the days of MDTA.

Issues and Tensions

The diversity to be found among successful school-to-work programs springs not so much from differences in what is taught as from tensions that develop between goals which may be viewed as being in conflict. A look at a few of those areas of tension is instructive.

Academic Credit?

One major issue centers on whether to award academic credit to high school students for school-to-work activities in the classroom. A "yes" to that question, of course, presupposes that the individual in charge of school-to-work training is a certified teacher, which is not always the case, and that the training goes on in a classroom or some other group setting, which is also not always the case.

In site visits to more than a dozen in-school, second-generation, school-to-work programs, MDC staff found general agreement that participants should undertake program activities in the classroom or, at least, in some sort of group setting. Individual counseling is seen as useful, perhaps even crucial for some students. But where participants are being treated singly or on a catch-as-catch-can basis in corridors or offices between classes or after school (and that continues to happen in some programs), that "individual counseling" is not a planned methodology, but rather the result of the program's inability to choose participants early enough or otherwise to arrange for a regular classroom period.

But where school-to-work materials are being covered in the classroom, the debate over credit continues, reminding us of the old battle over

the accreditation of vocational education instructors. Should participants receive academic credit for school-to-work activities in the classroom? Should they even be graded, as some currently are?

The argument for awarding credit usually states that credit can be an additional incentive to the participants to stay in school and win their diplomas. Earning a credit or a half-credit, it is argued, at least provides the participant with a sense of progress and can have strong motivational as well as academic influence. Many school-to-work professionals, however, disagree with that argument. Dr. Jane Schade, who heads the Arizona JAG program, and Karen Hoeb, who directs the Jobs for Cincinnati Graduates program, come at the matter from disparate backgrounds -- Dr. Schade as an educator and Ms. Hoeb as an administrator from the private sector -- but they agree on this point. "In classroom, yes, but for credit, no," says Dr. Schade. The still-untrammeled ghost of the bureaucratization of vocational education can be seen over the speaker's shoulder here. The fear expressly worded is that school-to-work will become "just another class."

Jobs or Clubs?

Another point of stress in school-to-work programs turns on the issue of whether the participants ought to have part-time jobs during the school term (most programs favor part-time work for participants during the summer), or instead be organized into career association "clubs" similar to but generally more inspiritory than the Distributive Education Career Association clubs which operate in many public school systems.

Feelings run high on this issue. If there is a distinguishing characteristic that sets off programs that do and do not utilize the career association idea, it is that the more urban programs, dealing heavily with disadvantaged inner-city minority youth, generally do not. "These kids are skeptical of any club or rah-rah stuff," says Ted Dooley, who runs the Boston Collaborative program. "It sounds too middle-class to them. Besides, in the suburbs, school is where kids go to have their social life; in the inner-city, school is an interruption of social life."

Dooley is a staunch believer in part-time jobs during school for the participants, and that is a charactristic of the Boston program. "There's no training for a job like a job," he argues. He maintains that the part-time jobs present a microcosm of the full-time world of work the youth will enter after graduation. The Boston program attempts to build a continuum, with juniors and seniors placed in part-time jobs during the school year, in full-time work during the summer, and then on to full-time permanent jobs after graduation, with emphasis on penetrating the primary labor market.

On the other hand, the Jobs for America's Graduates' use of the career association concept has made believers of many observers, including staff who began with strong doubts. "I was a tad cynical about it myself," says Larry Fitch, chief executive of Jobs for Bay State Graduates, whose office is located in Taunton, 30 miles up the turnpike from Boston, "until I saw 30 kids and two job specialists jumping up and down at once because they had won the school exhibit. The key

thing is everybody wins something, a certificate at least, and it really brings these kids together."

It is not written in stone that part-time jobs during the school year and the career association approach are mutually exclusive, but considerations of time become important with students whose first goal continues to be graduation. While many JAG programs have participants who work part-time during the school year, the career association concept has taken hold in most JAG programs as a result of strong feelings for it in the Delaware program. Typically, it utilizes contests at the local level, building up to state competition, with prizes and a recognition night that involves parents in a success experience with their children. There are also fund-raisers staged by staff and participants for various program-related purposes. In the office of Ralph Barrow, the Delaware JAG chief executive officer, there is a framed five-by-seven photograph of six young people wearing JAG blazers -- state officers of the career association, beaming pride in their program for all the world to see.

This writer, too, was skeptical of the career association concept until a visit to the Arizona JAG program. The following are excerpts from notes taken during a visit to Casa Grande High School in April of 1983, when the silver mines were shut down and that Anglo-Hispanic-Indian town was in the throes of deep recession:

> The photo album Diane Young (the job specialist) showed me was popping full of pictures of kids . . . kids jumping, throwing a ball, dancing, mugging, giggling, clowning, running, sitting. . . . But one picture stood out: A tall, black boy and a white girl hugging each other. . . . What is interesting is that they are not looking at each other but out at the others, the group of kids around them. . . . The look on their faces is peaceful. Diane tells me that the girl had

> twice tried to kill herself and had spent time in an institution. . . . The boy was an athlete, star basketball player, who broke his hand and had to sit out his senior year. He put into the career association club the energy he would have put into athletics and became a leader, someone all the others looked up to. . . . The girl found that she could talk to him and to others, especially other girls who had felt the way she felt, unloved. . . . These two are the ones who went to the Association Board meeting I attended and spoke about what JAG meant to them. "Before I got in JAG I was nothing," the girl told these movers and shakers of the community. "Now I feel like I'm somebody." Now the boy is somebody else. His hand is healed, but he is not that much into basketball anymore. . . . He is thinking of college, though, possibly of becoming a doctor. It could be out of his reach, Diane speculates, but who knows, who knows what these kids can do.

Most in Need?

Another major point of debate in school-to-work programming is the question of whether to enroll economically disadvantaged participants exclusively. Federal funding, first from CETA and now from JTPA, drives the programs toward the disadvantaged-only approach, and so does the impulse to serve those "most in need."

This issue, however, deserves elaboration. Poor youth, of course, do not have sole proprietorship of poor attitudes and work habits. There are likely candidates for school-to-work programs who are <u>not</u> economically disadvantaged, just as there are economically disadvantaged youth who are headed for higher education and have no need of school-to-work services. The term "most in need" does not speak only to relative economic status.

Beyond that, there is evidence that a natural mix of young people from both sides of the line of cultural and economic disadvantage has its rewards. Regis H. Walther, a knowledgeable observer of vocational education, commented on an earlier group of school-to-work programs: "The training objectives of these programs might have been better served if the enrollee groups had included some older, succeeding youth. The presence of success models, in turn, could have been expected to increase interest in and commitment to training goals."[7] In the Boston Collaborative, private funding has permitted enrollment of up to 20 percent non-disadvantaged participants, and Ted Dooley considers that a blessing: "They definitely can be used," he says. "They will start a dialogue. 'Why did she get the job? Because she's white. But that ain't all; she dresses well. So she dresses well; she's got money. But that ain't all, she presents herself well. . . .'"

The strongest argument for concentrating on economically disadvantaged youth in these programs is that there is so little money and so many young people in need that it seems wisest to serve those who are hardest to serve -- those the schools miss most completely, most of whom are economically disadvantaged, minority youth who simply would not succeed without assistance. Yet that approach can also raise conflict with the private sector partner in a school-to-work venture. The employer, of course, wants the best of the eligible youth; the heavier and more effective the private sector involvement, the more programs are pushed to succeed by enrolling young people who are most likely to succeed.

Job Placement

A final point of stress in differing school-to-work exemplars is the issue of whether the individual who provides the training and counseling should also be responsible for job placement. In the Jobs for America's Graduates and Boston Collaborative programs, that is the case. In other programs, the training is conducted in the classroom by certified teachers who, in some cases, also teach straight academic courses. In such programs, job development and placement may be the responsibility of a coordinator working for an outside, private sector-connected agency, such as a Private Industry Council in a JTPA program.

In that situation, where there is a choice between employees of the school and employees of an agency outside the schools, the central issue of institutionalization is joined. In Richmond, Va., examples of both approaches live side-by-side in the same school system: Jobs for Virginia Graduates, with its outside-in approach, and the New Horizons program, which can be described as working from the inside out.

* * *

The New Horizons program in Richmond was the first in a series of school-to-work demonstrations that came to be known collectively as the "Partnership Project." Ruby Martin, a former Youthwork board member who now, with Frances Rosi, directs the Partnership Project, describes the New Horizons program as "an elitist program for economically disadvantaged kids." The description is apt. The program works with

high school juniors and seniors who are disadvantaged but who have good attendance records, passing grades, and no serious behavioral problems.

In 1980, when the federal Youth Career Development programs were cranking down and programs patterned after Jobs for Delaware Graduates were beginning to spread, Youthwork received foundation support for a national test of school-to-work transition based on a private sector/education "partnership." The Richmond pilot program was joined by nine other locally oriented programs around the country. (That number has recently been reduced to seven, but new funding calls for a second tier of ten.) The Partnership concept prides itself on diversity -- "we provide money to allow the other Partnership programs to be inconsistent," says Ms. Martin -- but the primary goal of the New Horizons program is to serve as a demonstration.

Inside The Schools

The program began with a search for instructors within the Richmond school system itself. A rigorous screening process resulted in the selection of six classroom ("not vocational") teachers who were trained in the use of a curriculum developed by professionals at Virginia Commonwealth University.

The target group for the program were juniors and seniors in high school who were ready and willing to go to work right away. The program attempts to use part-time outside work to feed back into in-school curriculum. Participants move from their in-school situation during

the regular year to more intensive work-study combinations during the summer on the VCU campus.

In a sense, the program is less a school-to-work mechanism than an education-for-work activity for the students involved. The part-time jobs the students get are not thought of necessarily as stepping stones to immediate, full-time employment after graduation. The idea, instead, is to use the jobs as part of a process to bring out the best in the students chosen for the program. A recent follow-up of the 40 New Horizons graduates of June, 1983, showed that only eight (20 percent) were working to the exclusion of further education, while 24 (60 percent) were either attending college exclusively (14, or 35 percent), or combining work with college (10, or 25 percent).

Jona McKee, who coordinates the project as an employee of the Private Industry Council of Richmond, is in charge of job development for New Horizons youth. He concedes that the program has been criticized for sending so many youth on to college. "You have to remember," he says, "that these are kids who say they are not going to college and look like they are not going to college when they come in the program. The program has got something to do with this change of attitude, we believe. And they get more education and many of them come on back to Richmond to be employed afterwards."

Creaming -- Or Motivating?

The criticism that a program is sending too many youth on to college -- with the implication that it is "creaming," or helping youth who

could just as well help themselves -- is one that is leveled at many different school-to-work programs. McKee's response that the program motivates many youth who would not otherwise dare to go on to college is one that is heard often as well. Comparison studies of participants and non-participants in the short-run and longitudinal studies over a number of years might shed useful light on the question of the degree to which such programs are responsible for on-to-college motivation. But the overall percentage of school-to-work graduates who go on to "college" may be misleading to those for whom the term conjures up visions of four-year professional degrees. In the Casa Grande, Arizona, JAG program, a 20 percent "college" placement rate during the recent recession translated into placements in junior college training courses and, in the case of a number of American Indian participants, into government-sponsored, free colleges. Whether or not the program motivated young people who otherwise would have missed post-secondary opportunities, it is certainly arguable that placements in further education and training in a period of job scarcity are defensible.

Argument For Institutionalization

Visible in the background behind this discussion is the larger issue of the decision-making apparatus that ought to come into play in guiding school-age youth into jobs or into further education or training. Those decisions are sensitive and best not made hastily or irrevocably. For that reason, school-to-work programs need to link closely with the educational system. That is the best argument for

eventual institutionalization -- that the school-to-work program can affect the educational system, and the educational system can respond with more sensitive tracking of its students toward careers.

In any event, the focus of the New Horizons program is less on outcomes for the small group of participants than on institutional change. The PIC paid the initial six teachers handsomely, and the summer program "moonlighting" made the job even more attractive. In the second year, however, the school system picked up the teachers' salaries, as planned.

School Superintendent Richard Hunter believes that the school system profits from the presence of the New Horizons-trained teachers in the schools. "Just having them in the schools has an impact on the thinking of the other teachers," he says. He notes further that the school system released distributive education classes in the fourth quarter of last year so that DE students could take advantage of the New Horizons program in finding part-time jobs.

Jobs For Virginia Graduates Good, Too

Hunter and Ellen Chewning, supervisor of guidance services for the Richmond schools, also like the Jobs for Virginia Graduates program which is operating in all six high schools along with New Horizons. They see JVG as complementary, rather than competitive. Where the New Horizons youth are identified in the 10th grade, picked up by the program in the 11th grade, and helped into part-time jobs, the JVG participants are all seniors. "They are the ones nobody has been able

to help," says Ms. Chewning. "JVG said give us those kids for nine months, and, since our job specialists have nothing to do but teach JVG and look for jobs, we'll succeed in finding them jobs."

Jobs for Virginia Graduates has the active support of Governor Charles Robb. It has funding from the General Assembly, the Governor's Discretionary Fund, the Department of Public Instruction, and the private sector, in addition to federal funding through JAG. The funding picture for the future does not include a further contribution from JAG, according to Lawrence LaFleur, the JVG chief executive officer, who maintains that funding will come from the host cities (the program is also expanding to Roanoke this year). Still, there are no plans to institutionalize JVG personnel in the school system, and JVG's management capacity is expected to remain in a separate office for the foreseeable future.

How important is the independence of programs like JVG as against the folding into the school system itself of the techniques of school-to-work, as in the New Horizons program? Chewning sees some advantages in having the JVG office on Main Street, away from the educational heartbeat of the city schools. "They don't have to report to the schools. No tenure, no contract, and if they don't produce, they are out."

Still, she hastens to add, the JVG operation is essentially for students who should have been receiving additional help from the public school system before their senior year. "If we had done more for them in the fifth, sixth, and seventh grades, we wouldn't have so many who fall into the JVG category of having to be saved," she observes.

A Third-Generation Program

The New Horizons program aims at the kind of penetration into the educational system that could affect young people of those ages. It exhibits aspects of the "third generation" of school-to-work programs -- programs that are not only "in" the schools, but "of" the schools. It is at this point in the institutionalization process, however, that problems of maintaining the freshness of the school-to-work program approach can arise. Dr. Thomas Hephner of Virginia Commonwealth University, who was instrumental in developing the New Horizons curriculum, believes he sees some problems. "They've had three good years, but I think the program has lost some of the innovative quality that it had," he says. He adds that that is not the fault of the instructors, whom he describes as "excellent," but is related rather to the fact that those instructors may teach three classes of English during the day, along with the one class in the New Horizons school-to-work curriculum. "It's difficult for them to switch gears," he says, and quotes one of the teachers: "It's almost a contradiction. In the normal school setting, the premium is on the kid who sits down and shuts up. In the business world, the premium is on the one who has confidence and speaks out assertively."

Hephner thinks that the New Horizons teachers are more effective in the summer, when they are with their charges exclusively, bringing them to the VCU campus at 8:00 a.m., turning them loose at 11:00 a.m. to go to their jobs, and spending a good bit of time refueling through contact with other teachers. Ms. Chewning agrees with that assessment.

She thinks that the New Horizons teachers would be more effective if they did not have to teach academic courses and could do job development instead, like the JVG job specialists. "But that takes more money than we had," she observes.

* * *

If the foregoing suggests -- as this writer thinks it should -- that there are very different ways of looking at what is being called school-to-work transition, then it is also worth asking whether all the essential elements for creating a "model" of how the transition might work are in place in the present, largely second-generation initiatives.

Individualized Education

The answer seems to be: not quite. Estimates vary, but millions of high school youth who are or could be involved in transition programs have math and reading skills well below their actual grade level. Recent tests of 9th graders in the Boston schools showed a serious lag in reading and math skills that seems to have occurred between the 6th and 8th grades. Dropouts from school occur with frequency, not surprisingly, in the 9th, 10th, and 11th grades, corresponding not only to the students' attainment of the legal age for leaving school, but also to the loss of the skill-acquiring momentum necessary to achieve graduation.

Opinions vary as to how to deal with the problem. More and better teachers is an answer frequently supplied and likely to find favor as the subject of educational reform is raised once again. Research has shown that a variety of alternative methods can substantially improve the competencies of the most educationally disadvantaged of these youth. Job Corps participants with sixth-grade reading levels at entry have, given self-paced, open entry-open exit instruction, gained 1.5 grade levels in 90 hours of study, and 2.2 grade levels in 150 hours.[8]

A number of these remedial educational systems, often computerized, are available. The advantage is that they make it possible for individual youth with different styles and paces of learning to move through ordered educational gates, without being rushed by lock-step classroom teaching into territory for which they are not prepared and in which they are certain to be lost. Robert Taggart, former head of the Office of Youth Programs of the U.S. Department of Labor, has developed a comprehensive system (Comprehensive Competencies Program) which provides self-paced instruction covering academic objectives from the most rudimentary to those needed for high school graduation, and covering as well an array of functions considered necessary for successful adult performance in the work-day world. The system is ready for an upcoming test in the Jobs for Delaware Graduates program.

Two Issues Related To The School-To-Work Transition

While a self-paced learning system seems suitable for school-to-work transition programs operating at the senior high school level, its

utility would seem to be even greater in the earlier grades where difficulties begin to occur and where the dropout problem has its genesis. That situation underscores dramatically the fact that what we call school-to-work transition programs are, in effect, only parts of an education-for-careers process that should be occurring all through the schooling years. And the school-to-work parts of the process are, at present, delivered as add-ons after much damage has already been sustained.

Many observers feel that the vocational education system is in need of a thorough overhaul, that it is unresponsive to the contemporary needs of employers, and that its equipment and instructional methodologies are outdated. Much recent thinking has led to the growing conviction that work skills are best acquired on the job. "Moreover," adds one student of the situation, "such job-specific skills, when taught in the classroom, are best taught in postsecondary programs or in separate vocational schools, not in comprehensive high schools."[9]

It is that conviction that informs such vocationally oriented school-to-work efforts as the Philadelphia Academy, in which four high school-level academies teach potential dropouts skills in such areas as electrical repair and assembly; the George Westinghouse Vocational-Technical High School program in Brooklyn, where 45 companies have helped the school to assess and revise its curriculum; and other programs that take students to industrial and business settings for job-shadowing or on-site training.

Many of the industrial leaders taking part in school-to-work programs believe that such programs offer a unique opportunity for reassessing

vocational education and its place in the comprehensive high school. One of them is Richard Haitt, a Procter and Gamble executive on loan to provide liaison between the private sector and the Jobs for Cincinnati Graduates program. Haitt states emphatically that employers prefer to do their own skills training and want motivated employees with job-holding and relationship skills above all. He believes that the new school-to-work curriculum should be integrated into vocational education, and that the process should begin no later than the seventh grade. "At the beginning of their vocational education training they should get something from the JAG curriculum plus remedial training. . . . I'm not convinced how significant the behavior changes are that we're bringing about when we get them at the 12th grade."

Dr. Willis Holloway, assistant superintendent of the department of student services for the Cincinnati schools, agrees with Haitt, but talks of even more fundamental change in the school system. He feels that the schools' guidance counseling system should be overhauled completely to focus more on young people not bound for college. "Since most of the kids do not go to college, we ought to be giving them something they can use, and at the end of that something, we ought to have -- yes -- an employment service here in the school system."

He would begin as early as the fifth grade -- "Urban kids particularly need to start early, because while they may be socially mature, they are not emotionally" -- and track all students somewhat in the European manner, but without closing gates on slow developers. "We need to make it clear that if the kid catches fire at any point and can handle college, he or she will be helped to change tracks."

The comment on counseling reminds us that the present system in many if not most high schools is a remnant of the old Smith-Hughes vocational guidance counseling. Created to assist youth who were not going on to college, counseling has gradually been professionalized to the point where those youth are often the least likely to be assisted. Counselors are too few to reach all high school youth, and they often focus on the academically advantaged ones who are bound for college.

Institutionalization: Two Experiences

This theme of an early start and a rethinking of present-day vocational education and guidance counseling is repeated again and again by educators with responsibility for those young people who are probably not going on to college. They say, simply, that the process of readying youth for what happens after high school should be a seamless one, with the necessary learnings and supports put in place beginning as early as elementary school and continuing on through the senior year. Again, this is, essentially, the argument for institutionalization of what is now called school-to-work transition.

This institutionalization issue is crucial now, because many individual school-to-work programs do not seem to have given hard thought to the issue. Institutionalization does not seem to proceed automatically (or even rationally) from the presence of a school-to-work program outside the schools. All the evidence is that institutionalization must be planned for from the first day forward if it is to occur at all. In that connection, it is useful to look at two of the old Youth

Career Development projects that survived their original sponsorship by the Office of Youth Programs.

One such program was run by the Urban League in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. The program was housed in the city's Career Center, and students from the high schools in the city came to the Center at various times during the day for school-to-work activities. In its monitoring reports, MDC described the program as one of the best in the country, citing it particularly for the strong ties it had with industry. In a sense, the program was a prototype of today's "partnership" programs. Yet despite the fact that the program still had 102 enrollees in the spring of 1983, by October, with the start-up of the Job Training Partnership Act, the program had died.

In Portland, Oregon, something a little different happened. The Portland program was funded by the Women's Bureau through the Northwest Regional Education Laboratory and thence into the city's schools. From the first day, the Portland program was designed with institutionalization in mind. "We decided we were going to last, one way or another," recalls Andrea Hunter, the Laboratory's youth coordinator.

The program's purpose was to break down sex stereotypes in the local school system, which at that time used a "blue box" of job lists for boys and a "pink box" of job lists for girls. Instead of putting its own personnel directly to the task at hand, Laboratory personnel trained teachers and counselors in the school system to teach the YCD curriculum. In a memorandum dated May 18, 1980, MDC noted: "Portland project staff feel that much of their success in achieving close collabo-

ration with local schools is attributable to the fact that from the very start, the YCD program was identified as a school effort -- not something being imposed from the outside."

The Portland program, which at its peak enrolled 120 students in 11 of the city's high schools, is defunct now also, but the school system gained and retains "sex-fair" curriculum materials and a cadre of trained teachers and counselors who continue to implement the YCD curriculum as part of their teaching and counseling routines. "The biggest change is attitudinal," Ms. Hunter says. "That's hard to measure on paper, but it's really there, and it's really important."

The Portland program concentrated on the schools and, like most YCD programs, did not concern itself directly with job placement. It had some third-generational impact on the schools, but it did not attempt to involve the private sector, as the best of the current programs are succeeding in doing.

* * *

Today, the door is open for private sector involvement in employment and training programs as never before. That open door is largely a result of the phasing out of the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act in favor of the Job Training Partnership Act. Under the new legislation, the major actor is the Private Industry Council (PIC), mandated as the local agent for JTPA program planning and review. The PICs, with their majority private sector representation, are seen as ideal operators of school-to-work transition programs.

The local origin of the PICs should also work in their favor. Jobs for America's Graduates is the only national initiative to have shown impressive success, and its "national" aspects extend more to political and public acceptance than to actual program operation. JAG has taken care to secure genuine local involvement before mounting a program in a new site. In fact, its only statewide efforts have been in Delaware, a state with only three counties, and in Arizona, where the statewide approach may actually have impaired program success. That is not to say that statewide institutionalization of a school-to-work program is not feasible, but rather that it is feasible only as a long-term, carefully nurtured goal in states such as Minnesota and North Carolina, where there is a tradition of coordinated statewide programming activity directed by the state department of education.

PICs Must Be Sold

The PICs themselves can serve the functions filled by the large boards of directors utilized by many Jobs for America's Graduates programs -- those of legitimizing, publicizing, and fund-raising. To do that, the PICs must be sold on the value of the school-to-work process. MDC's experience persuades us that business and industry members will remain sold on the process only if some of them are in close, day-by-day contact with the program. Such contact may be maintained by:

- Frequent visits to the classroom to observe participants, first as they come into the program with problems of self-image and assertiveness, and later as they "come out of their shells" and begin to present themselves.

• Inviting participants to offices and plants to help them gain a better feeling for their capabilities and to acquaint them firsthand with particular work environments.

• Appearing with participants on civic club programs and talking with peers about the program.

• Committing to hire as many participants as possible, based always on satisfactory progress toward high school completion.

All this suggest that a PIC may want to form subcommittees to serve as links between the PIC and the community at large. At that working level, private sector PIC members should invite key educational personnel and community leaders who are not on the PIC to serve as liaison representatives to the PIC.

Initiating The Partnership: The Boston Compact

However the school and employing communities are brought together, they should see themselves as "initiators" of the program, not just as actors involved by some other, outside agency. As an evaluator for the Partnership Program noted: "Though sponsors in some cases may be able to design a program unilaterally and then successfully 'sell' it to the schools and business community, the most effective way to forge a partnership seems to be by involving both educators and employers from the outset."[10]

That is what has happened in Delaware and in Richmond and in other cities where school-to-work transition programs have managed to achieve a measure of success. It has happened especially, and with more of the ingredients for ultimate, total institutionalization, in Boston.

The partnership that developed in that city stemmed from a grave concern. Some 47 percent of the city's high school youth were "disappearing" between their freshman and senior years. Business firms inside the city felt that their potential labor supply was being depleted and that those youth who remained were unprepared for work and undereducated.

The partnership that eventually emerged in Boston also goes back to the early days of desegregation in that city in the mid-1970s. A close observer of that scene writes: "In fact, it was the Tri-Lateral Council for Quality Education, the coordinating agency for 21 major employers partnered with 18 secondary schools, that gave a major impetus . . . when its board -- which includes deputy school superintendents as well as company vice presidents -- secured School Superintendent Robert Spillane's agreement, soon after his appointment in 1981, to the setting of long-range, systemwide standards against which the progress of the partnerships could be measured."[11]

So the partnership in Boston grew in ground richly prepared with the nutrients for success. On September 22, 1982, the school superintendent, the president of Boston University, the chairman of the Coordinating Committee (the most powerful business organization in the city), and the chairman of the Private Industry Council announced the signing of the Boston Compact. The business community agreed to hire 400 high school graduates in permanent jobs in June of 1983, and to increase that number to 1,000 within two years, provided that, by 1986, all graduates meet minimum competency standards in reading and math skills as established by the school system.

Thus the Boston Collaborative, the school-to-work transition program established under the Compact, began securely under the wing of the school system. It had a plan for institutionalization from the first day of its existence. It had commitments and — even better -- achievable and specific goals and objectives both for the schools and the employers (and, implicitly, for Boston's youth). It is no wonder that the program has already brought about major change in the schools.

Buying Commitment

The Boston Private Industry Council -- a strong body even under CETA -- was chosen to run the program. A decision was made right away that may have been crucial. Involvement of the original schools in the program was through a Request for Proposal (RFP) process. The first year, 17 RFPs were sent out, and seven proposals came in, from which three were chosen. The second year the PIC sent out 14 requests, got back 10 proposals, and chose seven. "We got some real proposals," recalls Ted Dooley, who manages the Collaborative program for the PIC. "And we bought some commitment from the schools -- they had earned something; they hadn't been given something."

Proposition 2½, which had resulted in severe spending cutbacks in education, also had resulted in teacher layoffs. The Collaborative's institutionalization plan called for using certified teachers in the schools, so the PIC went to principals of the schools that had successfully bid for the program and asked them to select laid-off teachers who would be rehired for the new program. As a result, the teachers

for the programs of the Collaborative were not only certified, but choice -- and the principals' choice, at that.

Featuring a curriculum similar to other school-to-work initiatives but with this heavy involvement on the part of the schools, the Collaborative was seen as something deeply rooted in the educational system's attempts at self-improvement. "The headmasters (principals) saw it first as a program," Dooley said; "now they are beginning to see it as a capability."

In the second year of the Collaborative, the placement of school-to-work personnel in the schools has proceeded well past the rehiring of teachers, who are still on the PIC payroll. A number of tasks have been undertaken that have brought new personnel into the school system. A staff has been hired to run the command center in the school system for the Compact. That staff is responsible for job placement, work group activities, and planning in all 17 of the city's high schools.

Restructuring The Schools

The additional resources offered the schools by the Private Industry Council are being matched inside the school system itself. James Caradonia, head of vocational education, maintains that the Collaborative actually has been responsible for restructuring the school system in Boston. As a result of the Collaborative effort, the Boston schools found that they had an inefficient method for keeping attendance and other records, with that responsibility at each school heaped on a single data processor, who also had teaching responsibilities. School

leaders decided to create a full-time position in all high schools called "registrar." They reduced the number of department heads from 120 to 92, and with the money saved, they hired the registrars. They also hired in each school a "development officer," who was to be responsible for all out-of-school connections, including the Collaborative. Caradonia points to other personnel added as a result of the effort -- 17 bilingual instructors, for instance, all but one paid from local school funds; special-needs personnel permanently on the payroll; and others.

The results of the Compact agreement to date are impressive. Business leadership in Boston set four goals. First, it wanted to involve 200 companies in the Compact; it got 274. Second, it wanted the second-year expansion to go from three to six high schools; it went to seven. Third, the business leaders were shooting for putting 1,000 youth in summer jobs; they placed 1,181. Fourth, they would attempt to place 400 graduates of June, 1983, in full-time jobs; they placed 415.

Dooley is "highly pleased" with the quality of the jobs. The average hourly wage is $4.36 (on a scale running from the minimum, $3.35, to $9.16), and most of the jobs are in the primary labor market, concentrated in banks, insurance companies, and health-care facilities. Furthermore, the Compact agreement had put the private sector on the line. Prestige was at stake, and when it looked as though goals might not be achieved, extra effort was summoned up to see that targets were hit.

Not so incidentally, Richard Haitt, who is in charge of Cincinnati's similarly intentioned effort, thinks that the word "prestige" is key

to the effort. "What we need to do is establish these private sector jobs efforts at the same level at which the United Fund operates in many communities, where heading it up is a matter of considerable prestige in the community at large."

Education's Response

Now the ball is squarely in the schools' court in Boston. The school system's part of the bargain most immediately is a 5 percent increase in the number of students who graduate as compared to the number of that same class when it entered the ninth grade. The 5 percent increase is to be matched each year until 1986, by which time all graduates must demonstrate the reading and math skills necessary for employment through the achievement of minimum competency standards as established by the school system.

Observers outside the school system believe that the schools have put an extraordinary effort into living up to their part of the bargain. "From the beginning, the schools have seen this as their program," observes William Spring, president of the Private Industry Council and former staff director of the Task Force for Youth under the Carter Administration. All high schools sent teams of eight staff people to Boston University back in August to write a detailed plan on how to achieve the goals of improved attendance, basic skills, and the like. Those plans have been critiqued and rewritten. All 1984 seniors either have to be on track toward meeting basic criteria to make them eligible for job placement at graduation or have some alternative plan.

In their self-searching, the Boston schools have tested ninth graders and got results that were sufficiently alarming to emphasize the need for remedial work at the early grade levels. Many observers feel that if the Compact accomplished nothing else, it has underscored the link between employment and the performance of the public school system, bottom to top. "What these kids need besides the job-readiness skills a school-to-work program can give them is to be reasonably well educated, nothing less," says Dooley.

Meanwhile, the Compact is proceeding into the final promised year under major outside foundation funding. "Getting people on the school payroll is just a step toward institutionalization," says Jim Barr, executive director of the Boston PIC. "Then you've got to figure out how to carry the costs of doing the program on an ongoing, permanent basis."

* * *

If the Boston experience is recounted here without reference to flaws -- significant flaws did not show up in a cursory investigation, but may yet be present -- it is only to demonstrate that institutionalization of school-to-work transition programs is an achievable goal. The programs themselves must be seen first as part of a process of change rooted deeply in education. The "programs" themselves are, or should be, in transition from outside to inside the schools.

By definition, school-to-work must begin in the school. The goal should be to focus the attention of the schools on that large number

of students (between one-third and one-half) who are not sufficiently advantaged and academically gifted to be left to their own devices. The leverage for change is the private sector's ability to produce jobs for job-ready youth, but the Boston employers were right to insist on standards of education, not simply on the graduates' appearance and motivation. And where employers are committed, as the Boston experience shows us, they can positively affect all of public education from the earliest stages of schooling through career awareness, vocational education, and, where appropriate, special education.

The Outside Agent

If permanent change is to occur, it is clear that an independent, outside intervention agent is required. Institutions, like individuals, tend to resist change and usually require outside stimulation to do what they know they should be doing, whenever that is different from what they have been doing. The agent can be an outside organization like Jobs for America's Graduates, but it can also be a local body, such as a Private Industry Council. The advantages of the latter are that the PIC is local, that it represents the private sector -- a necessary partner in the program -- and that it links local funds with federal funds available through the Job Training Partnership Act. Once an outside agency is chosen, it is possible to visualize a matrix for institutionalization, using the Boston experience as exemplary, but allowing for variation:

• Establishment of a partnership agreement involving the intervention agency, the private sector, and the schools; and including goals and objectives and a plan for institutionalization.

• Acceptance by the schools of responsibility for teaching the curriculum and preparing students for employment according to the partnership agreement.

• Acceptance by the schools -- or in some manner by the local community -- of the burden of financing the processes stimulated by school-to-work transition according to the plan for institutionalization.

• Absorption of the school-to-work materials into the schools and integration with academic and vocational offerings.

In effect, the progression described above roughly parallels the stages of institutionalization by generations. If the agreement for collaboration outside and inside the schools is the first generation and the acceptance by the schools of responsibility for delivering school-to-work services is the second generation, then the funding issue can be viewed as the mark of the third generation, as described elsewhere in this paper. In the fourth generation, the programmatic material becomes fully integrated into other academic and vocational curricula in the schools.

While matrices are useful, the ideal is rarely attainable in the short run, and Boston is something of a special case in any event. There, the employing community had a genuine concern about the potential work force, and thus a sense of urgency. Adult unemployment was low, despite the recession. The school system was progressive, interested in change. The Private Industry Council had developed strong leadership

under CETA, and — most important -- the partnership between education and the private sector dated back almost a decade, long enough for a good level of trust to have been established. Yet for all of this, the issue of institutionalization remains to be settled in Boston.

Most communities have had to begin, and will have to begin, far more modestly. North Carolina, experimenting first with CETA and now with JTPA funding, with a leavening of foundation grants, has been encouraging the development of a school-to-work transition process called Job Readiness Training (JRT) in several communities in the state. The program began as an MDC initiative, and it was based on MDC's learnings from other school-to-work programs around the country. In one North Carolina county, JRT is fully integrated into a state-supported effort that includes programs designed to curb dropouts in the lower grades and to bring those who have dropped out back into school. In another county, to choose an extreme example, JRT will begin as a limited, after-school program staged in recreation centers by JTPA counselors.

Institutionalization Strategy

But even there, early signs indicate that some school personnel will be trained in the techniques of JRT, and even a very modest start will probably pay dividends. The institutionalization strategy in North Carolina is statewide in scope, with MDC, as the outside agency, having done considerable work with state-level school officials to win their support for tying together the JRT program with an overall effort going on in the schools; and with Governor James B. Hunt's new Commission on Education for Economic Growth. The Commission is tackling

the broader issue of education reform under the Governor's personal admonition not to forget the considerable body of students who do not seem destined for college.

The point is that institutionalization of the school-to-work transition process will not be a quick fix anywhere. Moreover, it is not likely to occur at all, in any place, unless the proper environment is prepared and unless deliberate planning is undertaken. The dozens of school-to-work programs going on around the country now have much to teach in the way of technique; but while we may know a lot about how to run the programs, we know considerably less about transforming them into components of our permanent system of education.

Programs In -- And Of -- The School

The major areas of tension observable in current school-to-work programs (discussed above, pp. 15-21) can offer clues that are helpful as we think through the process of institutionalization. If we posit a fourth-generation school-to-work program, we are talking of one in which the teachers will probably be accredited, and the students will probably be given credit. We can also assume that there will be pressures for grading participants, and pressure -- that will, it is hoped, be resisted -- to transform school-to-work activities into "just another class."

At the same time, the new school personnel -- the teachers and counselors of a fourth-generation school-to-work program -- would be fully accepted as part of the school's regular staff. One of the disappointing things about many current programs is the degree of isolation that

exists between regular teachers and school-to-work staff, despite the presence of both groups in the same school buildings. It is not enough that the school-to-work staffers be tolerated, which they often are when they are seen as dealing with the "hard cases," thus freeing up regular teachers to work with the better students. Rather, they must be recognized as full and equal members of the educational team -- as Dr. Hunter says they are recognized in Richmond -- and as capable professionals who can teach other teachers new techniques for helping the hard-to-reach student.

Effective school-to-work programs, then, must be of the schools, rather than merely in the schools. But if such programs are fully absorbed by the schools in a fourth-generation form, what is to keep them from becoming stultified, as some observers claim vocational education has become in many areas? What is to keep the schools, as institutions, from swallowing the new programs up and stifling their creativity? And what will keep the new school-to-work personnel from going the way of the traditional vocational education counselors, moving up to deal with the more advantaged and more tractable students, leaving underserved students still underserved?

Maintaining Outside Contact

The answer may be that these negative outcomes will occur, if they occur, the same way they came about in vocational education. There, as the employing community (and, indeed, the educational consuming community at large) withdrew its interest and support, vocational education, to that same degree, lost its vitality. If outside contact ceases

to exist, the institution in question will cease to deal with the need for change. At some point, the process of development will freeze, and stagnation will set in.

One of the best ways to assure the continuation of outside/inside involvement is to require that teachers who are in charge of the school-to-work curriculum also take part in the job development and job placement functions, working with the outside intervention agency -- in the cases of Richmond and Boston, with the Private Industry Councils. This may be more important than the issue of whether the participants in school-to-work programs receive academic credit for participating. If credit is given and participants are graded, the chances that the curriculum associated with this process will turn out to be "just another class" are lessened where the teachers have a role in helping their charges find jobs or further training or education slots. In my own experience, that part of the process motivates the teacher and the participant by providing a sense of "success" to the former and a continuity of support for the latter. In the MDC-North Carolina JRT program -- as in JAG programs -- the teacher in charge of the school-to-work curriculum is also responsible for hands-on job placement.

But that individual cannot be responsible alone for developing the jobs and placing participants. The genius of the school-to-work process as reviewed by MDC is the intimate involvement of the private sector. Large, prestigious, legitimizing boards of directors have useful functions here, but formal and informal groups of employers committed to hiring the youth -- committed to success of the venture -- are the sine qua non of the process.

This suggests that to keep the process vital, work needs to be done on developing and maintaining the partnership between the private sector and the schools. Institutionalization of the school-to-work process requires institutionalizing community partnerships as well.

And Now, JTPA

Certainly, the Job Training Partnership Act offers avenues for action in that area. The Act is predicated on the idea of public-private partnership. It is committed to enhancing opportunity for youth -- 40 percent of funds expended by Service Delivery Areas locally must be on employment programs for young people, and "eight percent" monies are set aside at the state level for educational coordination. It is possible to imagine an ongoing relationship featuring a sharing of funding and responsibilities between the JTPA Private Industry Councils and the schools that would strive toward accomplishing the goals of school-to-work transition from year to year. The JTPA Summer Youth Employment Program offers a natural tie-in to school-to-work, positioning it for the kind of year-round activity that has provided continuity in some of the demonstrations discussed here.

* * *

That is the image conjured up by Governor du Pont's initiative to add a new title to JTPA. The new title would provide $300 million to serve some 200,000 high school students in the first year, and the authorization would increase over time to $1 billion per year, sufficient

to serve 650,000 youth -- approximately 25 percent of all graduating seniors -- by 1988.

The program as presently outlined would make funds available to states and localities that chose to initiate school-to-work transition programs through a partnership between the local education system and the JTPA Private Industry Councils. The program would focus on the employment needs of young people without regard to their economic or social background: Participants would be those who run the highest risk of unemployment as assessed by objective testing and by the subjective judgments of local school officials and staff of the school-to--work transition program.

In The Right Direction

Setting aside for a moment the matters of funding level and pace of acceleration of the program as proposed, the du Pont initiative strikes out in the right direction. It ties a national school-to-work program securely to the Job Training Partnership Act and places the responsibility for initiating such activities at the state and local level. The language of an early press release suggests that the program be organized on an incentive basis, rather than as a categorical program with funding available for all applicants.

That is important because, as we have seen, school-to-work programs depend for their success on local inspiration, including joint decision-making by the private sector, the community at large, and the schools. Unless that sort of commitment is present, attempts to

create school-to-work transition programs are likely to fall by the wayside or to survive shakily only with repeated infusions of outside money.

The Jobs for America's Graduates programs have done a great deal to make the idea of school-to-work transition accessible to public consideration. The programs themselves have been among the best -- and surely the best-evaluated -- in the country. Yet they have also been clearly demonstrational in nature, dependent to various degrees upon guidance from the JAG office in Washington and special program funding from the U.S. Department of Labor.

The time has come now for a broader approach, one that can marry the lessons learned in the broad range of these demonstrational programs to a partnership effort -- with the goal of institutionalization -- wherever the PICs and local school systems sit down to plan together.

The timing could not be better. There is evidence that Service Delivery Areas are taking advantage of the opportunities provided under the Job Training Partnership Act for in-school programs. In San Diego, to choose one example, $310,000 in state eight percent money is being combined with $180,000 of local SDA money to put 800 high school seniors into jobs by June 15. In Leon County (Tallahassee), Florida, a version of the MDC-North Carolina Job Readiness Training program is being implemented for ninth- through twelfth-graders with local SDA money.

Recent national developments have made this last approach more attractive. Concern that the definition of "positive terminations" solely in terms of job entry might discourage the use of JTPA funds

in school-to-work programs below the senior-year level led the Employment and Training Administration to rule that Governors may allow SDAs to count as positive terminations young people who complete JTPA programs and meet "employment competency" standards set by the local PIC. In effect, then, where the PIC establishes such competencies, meeting them can substitute for job placement and qualify high school freshmen, sophomores, and juniors for the program.

If there is a problem with all this, it is that the flow of information to the states and SDAs about the opportunity is less than perfect, and working knowledge of how to set up school-to-work programs in local systems is lacking. For each state and SDA ready to capitalize on the opportunity outlined here, a dozen are unaware of this advantageous vehicle for helping youth and reaching their 40 percent youth funding goals. And among those who are aware of the potential, a considerable number are unsure about how to begin realizing that potential.

Beyond that, the opportunity for a national stimulus to a process which offers significant reform in the public schools of the nation is extraordinary. At this juncture in history, with a new and sharpened focus on what the schools are producing in the way of product, the forecast for progress is favorable. Both present experience and future potential argue for a national initiative in school-to-work transition.

* * *

In preparing this paper, I asked a dozen individuals whose experience had brought them close to the workings of successful school-to-work programs how best to spread the practice nationally. Without exception,

they agreed that the Job Training Partnership Act provides a vehicle for that proliferation process. At the same time, however, qualifying points found general consensus:

- Any national initiative should be based first on local (or state) initiatives, including an agreement between the schools and the private sector and definitely including a plan for institutionalization.
- The process of proliferation nationally should profit from the wealth of knowledge already available on how to do successful school-to-work transition programs.
- A national initiative should also provide some means of capturing that body of experience and making it available to other sites that are contemplating or already investing in school-to-work programs.
- All this suggests that the funding level for a national effort in this direction is not so important as a congressional decision to invest in school-to-work transition and a solid plan for that investment, making localities and states equal partners with the federal government.

What emerges from these suggestions is the outline of a plan for a national incentive program for school-to-work services, available to localities or states willing to make their own investment in the process, and attached to the Job Training Partnership Act. That could be accomplished by enactment of a new title of the Act; or by expanding Title IV, Section 452, which provides for "Research and Demonstration" and specifically mentions school-to-work transition; or by other means.

Most of those interviewed advised specifically against a large, categorical program through which funds would be made available across

the board. Several suggested that the most effective way to foster real institutionalization would be to require that the states and localities assume the funding responsibility gradually as part of the school system's ongoing operational budget. "Maybe a bonus at the end of the process to provide additional incentive," added one.

There was also general agreement that any national effort should involve technical assistance, process information retrieval, and some means of experience-sharing. James Caradonia, head of vocational education in the Boston schools, says: "We have to teach how to make available what's done in one of these programs to another. . . . There are only 10 or 11 things to do anyway, and what's right for Jacksonville is easy enough to figure out if you're Jacksonville looking at Cincinnati." Caradonia suggests that, in order to get special JTPA funding for a school-to-work program, a Detroit should be willing to agree to teach a Lansing how to do it later.

It is true that while the expertise for staging school-to-work programs is available in many communities, it is not common for those communities to share their experience with beginning programs in other locales. New programs do not know about more established ones, typically, or they do not have the time or resources to investigate. Beginning efforts often proceed to make the same mistakes that older programs made in the familiar process of reinventing the wheel. <u>For that reason, using federal funds to leverage the process of technical assistance to localities starting up new programs makes sense</u>.

<u>An incentive-based, partnership-based, locally operated, and federally funded effort to stimulate the school-to-work process wherever the</u>

ground can be prepared for it makes sense, too. Few other initiatives in the employment and training field over the past 25 years have offered so great an opportunity for changing the way educational and training institutions respond to the problems young people face in preparing for the world of work. No other initiative affords so good a mechanism for stemming the flow of entrants into the pool of structural unemployment.

At the same time, we do well to remember that the process will inevitably be a slow one, and one that cannot be speeded up artificially by an influx of federal dollars without threatening the quality of the programs. It will be far better to nurture the process carefully where it has been implemented, and then to send out missionaries with examples of successful operation and institutionalization to other states and localities.

It would be hard to imagine a better time for such a national initiative. If the nation is indeed embarking on a broad-based drive for excellence in public education, if we are setting out on a crusade for educational reform, then that crusade's goal should be to improve opportunities for all, including those young people, both in high school and out, who have no plans for post-secondary education or training.

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